

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

CHARACTER AND CONDITION

OF OUR

CHILDREN:

AND THEIR CLAIM TO A PARTICIPATION IN THE

PRIVILEGES AND BLESSINGS

OF THE

REDEEMER'S KINGDOM ON EARTH,

EXAMINED AND ESTABLISHED.

ALSO SOME REMARKS ON THE MODE OF

ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

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INTRODUCTION.



It is not only a duty which devolves on parents universally, to defend and protect their offspring from violence and injury; but a principle of unsullied affection indelibly inscribed on every parent's heart, by the Author of our existence, renders the prosperity and honor of their children more dear to them than every other object on earth.

Therefore, while we plead the cause of innocence, of those who are unable to defend themselves; of that interesting part of the human family who are entwined around the parents' hearts by the *strongest, purest* ties connected with our fallen nature, we must have the fervent prayers of every parent, and all good people for our success.

In pursuing this interesting and important inquiry, we must rise above the dark smoke of sectarian prejudice which has so long obscured some of the fairest features of Christ's Church, and embittered the pure waters of eternal life. Our Divine Master says, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

A want of brotherly love among professing christians, which necessarily inspires respect, confidence and harmony, has injured the Redeemer's cause on earth more than all the infidels and open enemies of the cross that have ever lived.

It should be the object of every servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, in all he says or does, to promote harmony and good will among men, especially among professors of religion.

My desire and sincere prayer is, that the following remarks may have no other tendency.

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

CHARACTER AND CONDITION

OF OUR

CHILDREN.

Our children have rights and privileges or they have none; if they have none, we should weep in silent anguish over their condition; but if a good and merciful God has granted blessings and privileges to them, parents should rejoice for the consolation, and not be regardless of the benefits extended to their offspring.

Almighty God is immutable in his character, and perfect in all his attributes; consequently, in all his works, there must be *consistency, uniformity, and harmony*; nor is it possible that any thing incongruous or deranged, in the slightest degree, could ever proceed from his hand. It is true, the soul of man is all in ruins; but this is not God's work—"an enemy hath done this." The soul was originally as perfect as any other part of creation; yea, it was made in God's own image, but sin has thrown it into universal confusion and disorder.

There is a uniform and beautiful agreement and harmony in the works of creation; so must there be in the work of redemption, if both are by the same Author.

The great Creator has stamped on every thing in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, a definite character and complexion, and by an immutable law of nature, he has wisely ordered that every thing shall propagate its own species; hence, the same seed uniformly produces the same description of plants. In the animal kingdom, composed of almost an infinite variety, the same universal law obtains. The offspring invariably bear the same complexion, and inherit the peculiarities of their parents' character. In every instance where the different species have mingled, Almighty God has stamped the act with his disapprobation, and decreed that such disorder shall proceed no further; they uniformly, in all such cases, cease to propagate.

It never was the design of our Creator, that discord should exist between the parents and children; they cannot differ in character or complexion; whenever this is the case, we may with propriety say, that *these are not thy works*, Parent of good.

It therefore *necessarily follows*, that if parents and their children are to be separated, one in, and the other out of Christ's kingdom on earth, *the plan is not, it cannot be from Heaven*, but must be the result of human invention. A kingdom, or a family, one half civilized, and the other half savages, will not bear the touch of reason.

God never designed that such an unhappy scism should exist in his kingdom or houses, either in heaven or in earth.

Let us now enquire, what is the character and condition of man? The inspired writer informs us, that God created man in his own image; consequently, in every respect perfect: in this holy, happy, and honorable state, his Maker gave him a law to regulate his actions, and to test his integrity. While Adam continued to observe this law, he remained an honorable subject of the Great King's earthly dominions; but our first parents transgressed that law, and thereby lost not only the image, but the knowledge of their Creator; hence they were banished from the kingdom of light and honor in which they were created, into a kingdom of darkness and disgrace: they were alienated from God and his government, and became subject to Satan, and subjects of the kingdom of darkness.

In his fallen, degraded, alienated condition, Adam begat a son in his own likeness. By an undeviating law of nature, children must resemble their parents. Hence the whole human family were involved in the consequences of our first parents' transgression; darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people. In this fatal tragedy, there was no line of discrimination drawn between the parents and their children. One was necessarily involved in the consequences of the other's transgressions; therefore, the complexion of each must be the same.

The language of inspiration on this subject is, "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Rom. v. 18. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Isreal, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephes. ii. 12. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. li. 5.

On the subject of original sin, great caution must be observed that we do not fall into unrighteous or unreasonable errors, or extremes. Some have already charged the children with the guilt of their first parents' sin; while others assert, that children are born into the world in an uncontaminated state, as pure and spotless as Adam was originally. These are the two opposite extremes, and both wide of the truth. But while our children are perfectly free from the guilt of Adam's sin, they are necessarily implicated in the painful, melancholy consequences, flowing from his transgression. To illustrate the case, suppose a distinguished citizen of these United States commits a high crime, for which his property is confiscated, and he is banished into a desolate island—there he is involved in poverty, exile and degradation, as a just recompense for his crimes: he is no longer a citizen or subject of this country. In this condition he begets children: they are not, they cannot be chargeable with, or guilty of their father's iniquity; yet they are necessarily implicated: they are also involved in poverty and exile: they are aliens, and of course degraded. They are no more citizens of the United States than their

guilty father: they bear his complexion, and can rise no higher than his level.

Adam transgressed, and was banished from the presence and kingdom of his creator: he became an alien, an exile; all his original wealth and glory were confiscated: he became ignorant and poor, and his character degraded: he was clothed with want, and shame and misery. Hence all his descendants necessarily bear the same character and complexion; all are implicated in, and affected by his fall.

Almighty God in his great goodness, has devised a plan, by which fallen man may be restored to his presence and favor again. He has erected a kingdom on earth for the reception and comfort of poor degraded, exiled, alienated man. The important question under consideration is, Have our children a legitimate claim to a place in this kingdom, or not?

Suppose a negotiation were entered into, making provision for the return of the exiled citizen, on condition that his children should not accompany him to the United States, but remain in banishment, at least until they were capable of deciding for themselves, whether it were a privilege to be citizens or subjects of this free and happy country, or not; would their father accept such terms? Would he voluntarily leave his exiled, alienated, impoverished offspring in that island, and return himself to his native land again? Not so. However debased his character might be, he would say, "My children cannot be separated from their father: they are more dear to me than all the honors of my native country. If they cannot return with me, I will spend my days in exile with them."

Is it reasonable to suppose that a merciful and righteous God would offer, or impose on poor exiled, alienated man, terms which he could not honorably accept—which he could not receive without violating the law of nature, established and confirmed by God himself, and extended to all the works of his Almighty hand? Nor is this all. Poor man, in submitting to such conditions, would have to do violence to the best and most exalted feelings of his nature.

It will only be necessary to examine the plan of salvation, as revealed in God's word, to discover clearly that He has not imposed unreasonable or inconsistent terms on man.

Almighty God, in boundless mercy and condescension, made a covenant with Abraham, and received him formally into his kingdom on earth. This distinguished patriarch was ninety-nine years old when he was taken into covenant relation with his Maker; and being an alien, a foreigner, a heathen, as were all mankind, it became necessary to place some discriminating mark or seal upon him, that he might thereby be distinguished from the subjects of the kingdom of darkness. This seal was circumcision, which no doubt pointed emblematically to the bloody scene which was subsequently transacted on Calvary.

Was Abraham received into God's kingdom on earth, and his lit-

the ones left out? Was he elevated from heathen degradation, and taken into covenant relation with the King of Heaven, and his children excluded? Was the universal law of nature departed from in this transaction, and a separation line drawn between parents and children? Not so. It was the work of God, and must bear the mark of his divine hand. Abraham's children were received with their father into God's kingdom on earth, and their heathen, or alienated character and condition wiped away on the eighth day.

Those, however, who are willing to dispense with all privileges and blessings for their children, under the milder and brighter rays of the gospel of Jesus Christ, believe that the legal dispensation has been completely abolished, and should never be named again by christians—that it only referred to temporal blessings, promised exclusively to the Jews. If God's word and reason confirm this idea, then must it be correct.

What is the language of inspiration? Almighty God speaks to Abraham, and says, "As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xii. 3, xvii. 4.

In reference to this important transaction, Paul says, "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 7, 13, 14, 29. In the 8th verse, he is very pointed, and says, "The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed."

Surely Paul did not consider the covenant made with Abraham, as relating only to temporal blessings, and extending no further than the land of Judea, and the Jewish nation. But says the objector, "We are not now under the law, but under grace: the former dispensation has passed away forever." Hence Paul says, "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13.

Let reason decide the case. Within a few years past, the people of North Carolina have changed their constitution; nor will any one of intelligence say they are now under the old constitution, that has been done away; yet every individual of common sense in the State, knows that every article and clause in the old constitution, which has not been abrogated or superseded by the new, remains permanently the law of the land. The good people of these United States, more than half a century ago, threw off the yoke of Great Britain. They

are not now, nor have they been, under the laws or the constitution of that kingdom since the declaration of their independence; yet in many instances, the old code of England is referred to, and made the rule of decision in our courts of judicature.

Are the laws and institutions of man to be more permanent than the institutions and laws of God? Not so. In the King of Israel there never has been, nor will there ever be, any change. The same God who gave laws to the Israelites, sways his sceptre in the gospel kingdom. In reality, the kingdoms are but one. The former dispensation was necessarily obscured by clouds and shadows, which were dispelled when the sun of righteousness arose to view.

Literally, when the sun appears above the eastern horizon, it produces an important, beautiful and interesting change on the face of nature; yet there is not one leaf or spire of grass varied in the slightest degree from what it was when shrouded in midnight gloom. Light has produced this revolution. To us it is a real change, yet in reality it is no change at all. So in the kingdom of grace. Light exhibits every part of the edifice in all its native perfection and beauty; yet God is not changed, nor any part of his work destroyed.

Without the old covenant, or the old testament, the new would be a broken fragment, which could not be systematized or understood by the most ingenious and learned divine on earth. It may therefore be said, with the utmost propriety, that every thing in the old covenant or former constitution, which has not been abrogated or superseded in the new—the *gospel of Jesus Christ, must stand firm and unshaken*. Children were entitled to a place in the former kingdom by the highest authority. There is not one sentence or clause in the new testament, which disfranchises or deprives them of that privilege. Therefore, their claim on this ground is not only honorable and just, but it is incontrovertible.

The Mosaic or legal dispensation is called a shadow of the gospel kingdom. Heb. x. 1. There must be a perfect agreement between the shadow and the substance. We respectfully invite those who deny children a place in Christ's kingdom on earth, to compare the shadow and the substance—the old and the new dispensations, and account for the chasm that is made by excluding children from the latter. To suppose the existence of a shadow, without any substance connected with it, is a plain contradiction—an absurdity. Therefore, it could not proceed from the divine hand—it must be the work of poor erring, bungling man. Reason loudly declares, that children cannot be excluded from the fold of Christ.

If, however, the gospel of Jesus Christ does not give our children an honourable and satisfactory title to those privileges, we must submit, however painful to our feelings, to see them cut off.

Let us, therefore, appeal to the King himself. "Master, as our children have literally and innocently suffered by the fall, or the transgression of our first parents, and were with them alienated and banished from thy presence; and as they have heretofore been recog-

nized as legitimate and honourable subjects of thy kingdom under the cold, dark dispensation of the law, are they to have no part, or lot, or place in thy gospel kingdom?"

What is the King's reply to this interesting query made by every affectionate parent? Hear it, and rejoice for the consolation. He says, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

This important decision has been recorded by three of the Evangelists, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word should be established.

It is an incontrovertible truth, that children, together with their parents, are in a state of banishment, or alienation from God; consequently, they are not in his kingdom on earth. That Christ should direct them to be brought to him, but not into his kingdom, is an idea too absurd even for intelligent prejudice to entertain.

The question naturally arises, how are our children to be brought to Christ? It must be either by circumcision or by baptism; there are no other ordinances appointed for this purpose.

Under the law, they placed the discriminating mark of circumcision upon God's people and children; but under the economy of grace, baptism constitutes a line of discrimination between the household of God, and those who are strangers and foreigners; between the subjects of Christ's kingdom and those who naturally belong to the kingdom of darkness. St. Paul says, Col. i, 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." God's people always have been, and must ever be distinguished from others—see Exodus xii. 12, 13. Ezek. ix. 4, 5, 6. Rom. iv. 11. 2 Cor. 1. 22. Ephes. 1. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 19. And are we willing to see our children rove like the savage, or run like the wild animals of the forest, bearing no mark of God's people or family?

As circumcision was the mark, or seal of God's people under the law, and that dispensation was a shadow of the gospel—baptism must be the substance of circumcision, or it will present a shadow without a substance; this would cast a shade of deformity over the work of redemption, which cannot exist if God is its author. Therefore, if children are to be brought to Christ, they must be baptized. Hence in our Divine Master's commission to his disciples, he commands them to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Children form a large and important part of all nations, consequently they must be baptized.

Let us enquire particularly how this commission is to be executed? "Go and teach them that I am their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Teach them that by nature they are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and

strangers from the covenant of promise. Teach or inform them that I have established a kingdom on earth, which is now open and ready for their reception; that they are now freely and affectionately invited to enter in, and partake of its privileges and blessings."

But if children are not to be received and associated together with their parents as subjects of this kingdom, will it not present difficulties, inconsistencies, and contradictions? To instance: The intelligent and reflecting part of all nations will naturally enquire, "Is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever? Is he the same King who ruled over the Israelites and established his covenant with them, and received their little children on the eighth day into his kingdom, and thus elevated them to bear the same character, and enjoy the same privileges with their parents; and does he now exclude our little ones from his earthly fold altogether? If we enter into his kingdom on earth, must we leave our children among the heathens still? Does he regard our offspring less than he did the children and descendants of Abraham? If so, he must have changed; he is not the same he once was. Under the gospel, he must be more unkind than he was under the law. Please to explain this difficulty?

Again: you teach us to pray—"Let thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Do not little children compose part of God's people in heaven? If you refuse to receive them into Christ's kingdom below, how can his will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven? You also teach us that we must be converted and become as little children, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Has Christ given us a model, a pattern which must be rejected, and the imitation only received?

Once more. If Jesus Christ has established a kingdom on earth, in which there is to be no children, it will resemble no good kingdom on earth or in heaven: therefore, the term kingdom is altogether inapplicable.

The King immortal, invisible, only wise God, never directed his disciples and ministers to teach the nations doctrines, which were, in their very nature, inconsistent and contradictory: therefore, children must be received into Christ's kingdom on earth; and if they are received, they must be baptized.

Let us, however, examine how the apostles executed their commission. The first gospel sermon preached by them after they received full authority from God, was on the day of pentecost; did Peter on that occasion teach the people that there was now to be a separating line drawn between parents and their children? Hear his own words—"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, *and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts ii. 38, 39.

In the covenant made with their father Abraham, the Almighty had promised to be a God to him and his seed after him—"and in thee

shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Hence Paul says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. Rom. xv. 8.

The apostles did not teach inconsistencies—they did not separate parents and their children. The Jewish parents had always been accustomed to dedicate their children to the Lord under the law, and under the new covenant they may still do the same.

Another argument to prove that the apostles did not "teach the nations" that parents and their children were to be separated under the gospel, may be drawn from the circumstance of their baptizing entire households. Children are found in almost every family or household; therefore, if they are not to be baptized, the inspired writers opened a very wide door for collision and difficulty, when all are to be of one heart and one mind; where there should be no discordant sound heard. We respectfully ask those who are opposed to infant baptism, to say how many households they have ever known baptized where there were certainly no children?

Let us now notice a case, which has frequently occurred in modern times, and no doubt but it often happened in the days of the apostles, since all to whom they preached the gospel (except the Jews) were heathens—were gentiles. Suppose in one of those heathen families, the wife embraces religion, and is happily converted to God, and baptized; she is now a christian, but her husband is still a heathen; what must be done with the children? Must they continue to be classed with the heathen father, or may they be identified with their christian mother? If they must remain with their father, then let them alone; but if they may be honoured and elevated and classed with their christian mother, something must be done for them—some legal process is indispensably necessary to effect that change—that process is baptism.

Without divine authority or instruction in this case, great difficulty would ensue. The holy scriptures, which are given to us for a lamp to our feet, and a lantern to our path, has not left us in the dark in this intricate and perplexing dilemma.

The apostle to the gentiles says: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; (i. e. heathens,) but now are they holy." 1 Cor. vii. 14. This passage is so applicable, and so much in point, that it requires no comment. Therefore, if only the mother has become interested in the covenant of grace, and received into the Redeemer's kingdom on earth by baptism, her children may also be included; they may be baptized, and with their mother have their heathen name and character washed away, (the only kind of sin which water can wash away,) they are now no more "strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." If the father still remains a heathen, it shall be by his own voluntary choice; no part of the blame can be charged to a merciful

God, who has "done all things well," for us and for our children.

It may now be necessary to answer some queries frequently made by those who object to infant baptism, and meet their objections.

First. "What benefit can children derive from baptism? What good can it do them?" We answer by asking, is it any advantage or benefit to your children that they are not slaves or savages? Does it afford you no consolation to know that your children, even in infancy, are recognized as the subjects of a free and happy government, and carefully protected by its wholesome laws? And can you see no benefit resulting to your children from the pleasing circumstance that they are elevated with their parents into the Redeemer's kingdom on earth?

Is it a matter of no concern or importance to bear the mark of Jehovah's people, and to know that his everlasting arms of love and mercy are thrown around your little ones?

Is there a christian parent on earth who would not rejoice to have their children taken into covenant relation with their Maker, and to know that they were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God? Allow me respectfully to ask, can your unbaptized children claim those distinguished privileges? Every intelligent christian must answer in the negative.

It has been already proven, that all children are born in an alienated state. Aliens are legally dead; so must our children be; hence the word of God says—"For as in Adam all die," &c. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Now, whatever character children originally bear, they must retain, until it is changed by some legal process; this process must be baptism, which legally introduces our children into Christ's kingdom on earth; consequently, they are in that act legally brought to life; so that baptism may be called a new birth.

Some in the present day have mistaken the change in our condition effected by baptism, for a spiritual change, than which nothing can be more absurd. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." "Except a man be born of *water*, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water changes our relative condition, and elevates our character: the spirit renews, purifies and elevates the immortal part.

To place the benefit resulting from infant baptism in a more conspicuous and interesting light, let us suppose the case of an enslaved mother and her infant child; the child is as much a slave as its mother; consequently dead—dead to the law; were you to sell the child from its mother's arms, the law would neither condemn nor punish you for the deed.

But let the master emancipate the child, the moment the clerk makes the record, the child is brought to life; it that becomes as free as the master's child; yet the infant may be asleep; it is completely unconscious of the transaction.

But the mother's heart can now leap for joy—my child is free—

it cannot be sold now from my arms. The law now secures the rights of my child, and protects it.

This rational and scriptural view of the subject, would correct many erroneous opinions respecting infant baptism, and influence every feeling parent to say—"my children shall be brought to Christ; they shall be baptized—they shall no longer remain legally dead, and alienated from their heavenly Father's arms of covenant, love and mercy."

Some believe from this view of the subject, that we exclude unbaptized children from heaven; not so. Baptism relates to, and changes the condition only, and not the heart. The slave child will be taken to heaven as certainly as the child of the most pious divine on earth; yet there is a very wide difference in the condition and privileges of the two in this world. Because a slave child will be taken to heaven, should I therefore be as willing to see my child a *slave*, as a free born citizen of this country?

Until our children are baptized they are *legally* dead, and in a state of heathen degradation. Yet the spiritual condition of the slave is the same in God's sight as the master's child.

Secondly. Another enquiry is frequently made respecting infant baptism. How do you know that you were baptized in infancy?—Allow me here to relate the substance of a conversation which passed between a friend of mine and his neighbor.

Neighbor. How do you know that you have been baptized?

Friend. Do you think it impossible for us to know what occurred in infancy—say when we were a week old?

N. Yes, utterly impossible; the idea is absurd!

F. I think, then, that St. Paul was at least precipitate, and agreeable to your views, he has involved himself in some difficulty; he unequivocally declares that he was circumcised the *eighth day*. How did he know that fact? His neighbor was silent. My friend replied for him—"I presume if he wanted information on that subject, his Jewish parents gave it to him. Now, if I cannot confide in the veracity of my Christian parents, respecting my baptism, I shall bury their honor in the dust, and grossly violate the fifth commandment, and render myself a sinner in the sight of God."

Thirdly. An insuperable objection is made to infant baptism, by some, because they believe the word of God requires something as a pre-requisite, which children are incompetent to perform, viz. *Faith*. This objection is founded on what is said, Acts viii, 13, 17, and xviii. 8; but particularly Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If this text debars children from the ordinance of baptism, because they cannot *believe*, it must also exclude them from the kingdom of heaven—for they cannot believe, therefore they must be damned.—Such an idea would shock the feelings of a savage. The mistake which our objectors have made in the application of this text, is in

departing from a correct mode of reasoning; children are not embraced in the premises, therefore they should not be included in the conclusion. If they are excluded from one, they must be from the other, or all our arguments will terminate in error and confusion.

The objector further contends, that because the word *believeth* precedes the term baptize, the subjects must believe before they can be legally baptised. The order of words does not invariably determine the order of things. It is said "John did *baptize* in the wilderness, and *preach* the baptism of repentance." Mark i. 4. Agreeable to the above mode of reasoning, John must have baptized before he preached—which no one can believe.

There was a law in Virginia, under the old constitution which restricted all but freeholders from voting. Was that law written in the style and phraseology of this passage of scripture, it would read—"He that votes and is a freeholder, his vote shall be valid."—Would there be any one in the State so simple as to contend, that because the word *vote* preceded the term *freeholder*, a man must first vote, and then purchase a farm to legalize his vote? The case is plain. A man has been a freeholder all his life, and yet he votes and is a freeholder. The individual who has been baptised in infancy—when he believes, it may be correctly said in the language of the above text—"he believeth and is baptised." The word of God rationally understood, will not sustain this objection to our children, therefore it must fall to the ground.

Fourthly. "They ought not to be brought to Christ in the ordinance of baptism, because baptism is the answer of a good conscience. Children cannot enjoy the answer of a good conscience for what was done to them by their parents in infancy; therefore they should not be baptized."

By this parity of reasoning every foreigner who voluntarily renounces his own country—adopts this, and becomes an American citizen, must be more respected, and confided in above the individual who happened to be born in the United States—he had no hand, or choice in regulating his own destiny, while the naturalized foreigner enjoys the answer of a good conscience—he voluntarily renounced his native country and chose this for his permanent home. Yet the poor man who happened by fate's stern decree to be born on Columbia's soil, neither feels nor acknowledges his inferiority; but rationally and honestly claims a superiority over the naturalized stranger. David looked down with contempt on the *uncircumcised* Philistian; although David himself was no doubt *circumcised the eighth day*, which he esteemed a privilege that placed him above the heathen Goliah. Will that minister have the answer of a good conscience, for teaching parents that their little ones were not to be received into Christ's kingdom on earth, and recognized together with their parents as the people of God, because there was no express command to baptize them, when the inferential authority was as strong as that C. was born of his mother, though there was not a living witness on

earth of the circumstance; and while he daily received females to the Lord's table without any express command for doing so?

Will those parents have the answer of a good conscience for leaving their children like the savage of the forest, without any mark of God or his people upon them? For suffering them to run like the wild ass's colt in a christian land?

Fifthly. If children are baptized, it is said that they should partake of all the privileges of the Lord's house—they should approach their Father's table. This they are incapable of; therefore, they should not be baptized.

I answer, the child is an American citizen, and can claim the protection of the law with as much propriety as any other citizen of the country. The culprit would be executed as soon for murdering the child as the parent; yet children do not enjoy the entire privilege of the law, until they pass their minority. So in Christ's kingdom, as soon as the subjects are regenerated, converted, or born again, be that when it may, they can then claim and enjoy all the blessings of the church militant. They are then received into closer connection with the king. They can then approach their Father's table, and truly say, "Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ."

If our Divine Redeemer has called the gospel dispensation a kingdom, and there is not a corresponding resemblance between it and well-regulated earthly kingdoms, then is the term not applicable? The Lord Jesus does not make comparisons where there is no resemblance. He always speaks to the comprehension of frail mortals, that they may be edified and not bewildered.

Sixthly. Those who have been baptized in infancy, it is confidently said, are no better than others; therefore, they ought not to be baptized.

This objection may be satisfactorily answered, by asking, Are there no desperate characters in these United States?

Consult the annals of the day—examine your penitentiaries and jails, and you will find a black catalogue of natural born Americans, as well as naturalized foreigners, that would disgrace the name of savage. But does this prove that it is not a privilege to be an American citizen? Surely not. The King himself gives us to understand, that there will continue to be both good and evil in his earthly kingdom. He says, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all that offends, and them which do iniquity." Again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away." Math. xiii. 40, 41, 47, 48.

After those unequivocal declarations from such high authority, to refuse our children a place in their Redeemer's kingdom on earth, and a name among their fathers, because they might at some future

period become wicked, has at least the appearance of being wise above what is written.

In the conclusion of the old testament, we have the following interesting promise: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Mal. iv. 5, 6.

This promise refers immediately to the gospel day, when the enlightened and purified hearts of the parents will turn with tender solicitude to their children. They will no longer suffer them carelessly to run like the wild ass's colt; nor will they be willing any longer to name them as they do their domestic animals. They will recognize and receive the Holy One of Israel as their merciful sovereign, whose kingdom shall not be diverse from all other kingdoms in heaven or on earth. In every well-regulated kingdom, there are and must be children; and the affectionate parent should rejoice to hear our king say, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

We respectfully ask those who deny their children the right of baptism, consequently, any part or lot in their Redeemer's kingdom on earth, to say what is the character and condition of their children? Are they christians? No—they have no legal claim to that character. Are they Jews? No—they have not been circumcised, and thereby separated from the Gentile world. Are they then Gentiles, or Heathens, or Aliens; or have they no name on earth, or religious identity of character among the sons of men? In what a strange and unfortunate dilemma are those placed, who deny infant baptism!

If our children have never been dedicated to the Lord by any legal process; if they are still "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Ephes. ii. 12, how can we consistently ask God to throw his gracious arms of mercy around them?

Suppose a citizen of France were to become a subject of Great Britain, and immediately inform the King of England what he had done, declaring that he had no confidence in the French government. He then earnestly and pressingly requests his Britannic Majesty to extend protection to his little children. Would not the king reply, "Certainly I will. Parents and children are each the objects of my care. In the kingdom where I rule, parents and children are equally secure, and their respective rights and privileges sacredly guaranteed to each of them. Pardon me—your majesty does not fully comprehend the nature of my request—my children are still in France. It would have been tyrannical and cruel to have bound and brought them into your kingdom, without their own consent!

If France were his Britannic Majesty's legitimate province, but in a state of rebellion, having openly revolted from their sovereign's authority, but still supported by their king's bounty, the simile would

be more perfect, but the man's conduct would be equally unwise and absurd.

Children were the first Martyrs for the Lord Jesus Christ, (Math. ii. 16;) and will he in return, contrary to his own character, and the laws which he has established for the government of universal nature, and in opposition to his former dealings with the Jews, exclude them from the privileges and blessings of his kingdom on earth?

Reason, and righteousness, and parental affection, and the word of God—all conspire with one accord to say, "No—they shall not be excluded or cast off." The King himself proclaims aloud, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

REMARKS ON THE MODE OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

Having clearly established our children's claim to a participation in the privileges and blessings of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, we now proceed to offer a few thoughts on the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, which alone can give them a legal title to those benefits.

Should a master command his servant to execute a piece of work, without specifying minutely how it was to be performed, and then object to the manner of its execution, and chastise his servant because he had not strictly conformed to a definite rule which he had never plainly laid down, it would be unjust and cruel.

God is infinitely just and merciful, and will never demand of his servants any thing unreasonable. He will not reap where he has not sowed, or gather where he has not strewed. Therefore, he will not hold them accountable—condemn and punish them for not administering the ordinance of baptism agreeably to a definite rule which he has never specifically marked down for our observance.

One, however, peremptorily declares that this is not the fact, and positively asserts that the Greek word *baptizo* plainly and simply means to *immerse* and *nothing else*; he appeals to wise and learned men to prove his assertion. Another, as positively objects to this declaration, and refers to as many, or more authors and divines, equally as wise and learned and pious, who fearlessly declare that the Greek word does not exclusively mean immersion, any more than the word camel exclusively means an Asiatic animal. Now when two witnesses of equal standing in society, give testimony directly opposite to each other, both cannot be received; neither can one be taken and the other rejected; but both must be set aside: therefore, from the learned we can prove nothing; their testimony conflicts—both must be rejected.

Another, is astonished at the stupidity of men, and unequivocally declares "that it requires neither wisdom nor learning to understand this subject—the command is plain—it cannot be misconstrued, nor can we be mistaken unless we close our eyes to the truth, and become perversely obstinate." God's word expressly says, of Christ, "that he came straightway up out of the water; and of Philip and the

eunuch, that they both went down into, and came up out of the water; therefore, they must have been immersed, and nothing else can be baptism." As well might I charge my kind friend with an intention to burn me to death, because he pressed me to come into the fire! The master commands his servant to make a fire in the dining room; John obeys literally his orders, and burns the house down! When his master calls him to account for such conduct, he defends and exculpates himself by declaring, that he has done just what he was commanded to do—his master said not one word about making the fire in the fire-place or on the hearth, but in the room—"your orders master, were faithfully and literally obeyed."

We must, therefore, be pardoned for passing by and rejecting the disputes and conflicting opinions of the learned respecting the import of the word, and also the positive declarations of those who immerse Christ and the eunuch, because they went down into, and came up out of the water.

Instances in the present day have occurred, where the subjects went down into, and came up out of the water, and were baptized, but not immersed.

As there has been no definite mode prescribed in God's word for administering the ordinance of baptism, it is reasonable to say that the mode cannot be essential to the validity of the ordinance. My own opinion is decidedly, that sprinkling or pouring, is the most rational and scriptural mode of administering baptism; yet, as immersion is not forbidden in the sacred word, it may be innocently and correctly administered in that form to those who prefer it. God has said, "let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

It will at once be seen that we do not intend to denounce immersion; neither shall we use the bed of Procrustes, and lop off all who are too long, or stretch all who are too short for our measure. "Without charity, I am nothing."

I hear the objector say, "your liberality is incompatible with the word of God on this subject; therefore, it cannot be justified." Well, by that divine rule we will stand or fall.

"Does not God's word expressly declare that there is—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism," Ephes. iv. 5; which proves that there can be only one mode of administering the ordinance, and as nearly all professing christians agree that immersion is a valid mode, no other can be correct or admissible."

On examination, this conclusion from the text cannot be sustained. The apostle Paul is too good a logician to draw a parallel where there is no agreement. The parallel is—God—Faith—Baptism. First—"one Lord." In the God-head there are three persons, and these three are one. Secondly—one Faith. Abraham was strong in faith. Christ said to Peter, "O ye of little faith;" yet faith is one and the same thing, differing in degrees. Thirdly—"One Baptism." Sprinkling—pouring and Immersing, and these three are one.

This illustration of the text is rational and plain, and if it proves any thing in reference to water baptism, it is that there are at least three modes of administering that ordinance.

The gospel inculcates charity, and without it, St. Paul declares we are nothing. It would not, however, evince much charity, or expansion of soul in me, were I to erect a house at an immense expense, and then call my neighbors together and inform them that my house was in every respect a perfect house; therefore, every thing that differs from it in size or construction, is no house!

In the consideration of this part of our subject, we will first examine John's Baptism; its nature and design.

Whatever erring mortals may do, it is impossible that Almighty God should do, or direct any thing to be done, without having some wise and beneficial design in view.

Were I busily engaged in making an extensive excavation in the earth, and you were to enquire, "what are you doing? What is your object in all this labor?" and I were deliberately to reply—"I don't know!—I have no object in view!" You would at least suspect the sanity of my mind. Let us then enquire: First. What was the nature of John's baptism? Was it of Jewish or christian character? John must have acted either in the Mosaic or christian dispensation; that he appeared and acted in the former is evident from our Lord's words, and also, from those of the Baptist himself—"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke vii. 28. Mat. xi. 11. John said of himself—"He must increase, but I must decrease." It necessarily follows, that John's Baptism was a Jewish ceremony, therefore he could neither originate, nor administer christian ordinances.

Secondly. What was the design of his baptism?

The Messiah had long been promised to the Jewish nation: they had been for many years expecting his appearance. Zachariah said of him, "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke i. 17.

John came announcing the immediate appearance of their Saviour, the Holy one of Israel. It would be extremely indecorous and offensive to the character of a distinguished guest, to receive him into our house when every thing was in disorder, and the family clothed in their ordinary and soiled garments; nor would it be less mortifying to the family to be found in such a condition.

Hence we may rationally infer, that John's baptism was an emblem of that purity of heart—that spotless robe in which they should meet their King—the High and Lofty One who inhabited eternity, whose name is Holy. He came preaching in the wilderness, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Jews heard the intelligence, and ran from every part of Judea to receive his baptism. Nor do we hear any controversy, or one word of inquiry respecting this ordinance, from those people devoted to the custom of their fathers, and bitterly opposed to any innovation on their laws or customs. His baptism, then must have been regarded

by the Jews as a purifying ceremony. Do any object to this hypothesis? Let them show one more rational and scriptural. John received no members or proselytes into either the Jewish or Christian kingdom or church; therefore his baptism was not an initiatory ceremony; consequently, entirely different in its design from the Christian baptism.

As John was a Jew, and all whom he baptized were Jews, and as his was not the Christian baptism, but emblematic of the purifying ceremonies of the Jews, and calculated to soften their prejudices, and prepare the way for the reception of the Christian baptism, it is not reasonable to suppose that John could depart from the directions given by Moses for performing such ceremonies. It is, therefore, only necessary to know how the Jews were purified under the law, to ascertain how John baptised.

For this information we must appeal to the old testament—"And he shall sprinkle upon him, that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." Lev. xiv. 7.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them; and thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purification upon them." Numb. viii. 5, 6, 7. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifyeth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean—his uncleanness is yet upon him;" Numb. xix. 13.

The law of Moses abunds with directions for purifying persons and things; nor is there one instance where the unclean person or thing is commanded to be dipped or plunged into the purifying element. It is sometimes added, that the persons to be cleansed shall wash their clothes, and bathe themselves in water; but when the purifying element is applied by an administrator, it is uniformly done by sprinkling or pouring.

The prophet, looking forward to the extension of God's kingdom on earth, says "So shall he sprinkle many nations." Isaiah lii. 15. Again, there is a promise made to the dispersed Israelites, which must refer to the gospel days—and to a period yet to come—"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25.

St. Paul, in speaking of those legal ceremonies; to shew the intimate connection between the Mosiac and the christian dispensations, says, "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifyeth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God."

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with

water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry." Heb. ix. 13, 14, 19, 20, 21.

Thus we have sufficient evidence from the old and the new testaments, to prove that sprinkling and pouring were the legitimate and only modes of purifying persons or things under the law of Moses, when applied by an administrator. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that those people who have ever been, and are still tenacious to an extreme of every particular enjoined on them by their law, would have quietly submitted to see John depart from the custom of their fathers.

It is asked, "Why did John resort to Jordan and Enon, where there was much water, if he did not baptize by immersion?" He had his residence in the deserts and wilderness. Luke i. 80, iii. 2. He had no control over the synagogues or the temple; and the multitudes that flocked to him to receive the ceremony, could be better accommodated at the margin of a river, than in a house of worship.—The rural scene was best suited to the circumstances in which he was placed; and as the ceremony performed by him was typical of *purity*, he would naturally apply the most perfect emblem. *Running* or *living* water is purer than that which is stagnant. Moses also had directed that *living* water should be used for *purifying*.—See Lev. xiv. 51, 52, and Numb. xix. 17, 18. Hence the sign was not only more perfect, and expressive of the thing signified, but it was in accordance with their own laws and customs—a circumstance of the utmost importance with every honest Jew.

From John's own words, we have satisfactory evidence that he did not baptize by immersion. Whatever others may do, inspired writers do not draw parallels where there is no analogy or agreement. He says, "I indeed baptize you with water; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear—he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire." Every Christian will acknowledge, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost must constitute the substance; and that water baptism is only the shadow.

Now the substance and the shadow must correspond—it cannot be otherwise. The Holy Scriptures uniformly represent the Holy Ghost as being poured or shed forth; and unless John spoke unintelligibly and inconsistently, *SPINKLING* and *POURING* must be correct modes of administering the ordinance of baptism. Sprinkling and pouring may be considered as synonymous terms. We frequently say, when it rains very fast, "it pours down." The inspired writers also use the same language—"For he maketh the small drops of water: they pour down." Job xxxvi. 27.

If John immersed the multitudes who flocked to him in the wilderness, where there could be no convenient place to change their apparel, and those immense crowds of people, men and women, changed their dress in the presence of each other; or if they were exposed together in their wet clothes, it was not only a departure from the regulations of their fathers, but it was opposed to the laws of respect and

decency observed by all the civilized nations, and a direct violation of the Apostle's command—"Let all things be done devoutly and in order."

The baptism of our Saviour next demands our consideration. The following account is given of this interesting circumstance. "Then cometh Jesus from Gallilee to Jordan, unto John to be baptized of him, but John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? Jesus answered and said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water; and lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Math. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Observe, Christ does not say, I am about to set an example for my people to follow; neither does he say that he was about to institute, but to fulfil. Now as John could not legally administer any other than Jewish ceremonies, the righteousness which Christ fulfilled in his baptism, must have referred to some Jewish ritual. He had been circumcised at the proper age; and dedicated in the temple subsequently, by a legal offering. It was of vital importance that he should fulfil all the ceremonial as well as the moral law: his own declaration is—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Math. v. 17, 18.—Indeed he could not fulfil part only, without being an imperfect Saviour.

The law required that the priests should be washed with water, and annointed with oil previous to their entering into the priestly office; they entered into the work of the ministry at the age of thirty. Numb. iv. 47. Our Redeemer bears eminently the character of High Priest; and Paul says—"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." Heb. ii. 17. And Luke says—"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, thou art my beloved son: in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." Luke iii. 21, 22, 23. And in reference to the annointing enjoined on the priests in the law, Peter in his sermon to Cornelius remarks—"That word I say ye know, which was preached throughout all Judea, and began from Gallilee, after the baptism which John preached; how that God annointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Acts x. 37, 38.

Thus we clearly perceive the design of our Saviour's baptism, and what act of righteousness it was which he fulfilled in attending to that ceremony. If indeed the ceremonial washing enjoined on the

priests by the law, was not fulfilled by Christ in his baptism, we have no account that he ever did fulfil it; consequently his own word must fail, and his work be imperfect.

It therefore necessarily follows, that this act of righteousness must have been fulfilled as Moses directed. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them; and thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them, **SPRINKLE** water of purifying upon them." If then Christ did fulfil the righteousness of the law perfectly, which we all believe—we all know he did—then was the water sprinkled on him in his baptism. If he was immersed, the law was not properly fulfilled—the conclusion is irresistible.

Those who contend that immersion is the only proper mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, deny that Christ was inducted into the priestly office by John to fulfil the law, because the law limited the priestly office to the tribe of Levi. They should recollect, that the Levites were taken to fill the priestly office instead of the first born, See Numb. iii. 12, 13, and viii. 14 to 19. And when the darker dispensation was about to yield to the light of the gospel day, it was perfectly reasonable that the King Eternal who possessed fully the power, should change the priesthood or cause it to revert back to its original channel, and also the law regulating that office; to prove that this was done, the apostle to the Gentiles says—"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." For he of whom those things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Heb. vii. 12, 13, 14.

Paul here perfectly explains the difficulty; and to avoid collision with the Jewish authorities, God provided a special agent, virtually invested with every legal requisite to administer the ceremony to his son Jesus Christ, who is our Great High Priest.

Those who object to Christ's being inducted into the priestly office in his baptism, contend that it should have been done at the door of the tabernacle, and that all the little ceremonies to which the Jewish priests were subjected in dress, &c. should have been attended to also. The tabernacle was taken down. Christ says—"I am the door"—And even the smallest matters, the 'jots and tittles,' who is prepared to say, they were not virtually fulfilled? See the variety and extent of his humiliation and sufferings.

It is, however, further objected, "that Christ could not have been constituted a priest after the order of Aaron, because it is said he was a priest after the order of Melchisedec." He resembled Melchisedec in the dignity and perpetuity of his office. The Aaronic priests were made without an oath, and were subject to death: therefore, it was called a carnal commandment. But Jesus, that he might have the pre-eminence in all things, was made a priest with an oath, and like Melchisedec abideth forever; therefore, not like the dying sons of Aaron. "Order is heaven's first law." Christ must have been constituted a priest legally or illegally. He was not introduced into

the office clandestinely. Now, if our objectors will shew us the law, and the order by which Melchisedec was installed into the priestly office; how and when it was done; we will receive that as the rule of Christ's inauguration. God's word cannot conflict in any instance, and it declares that it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren of the seed of Abraham; Melchisedec was not of the seed of Abraham.

We have already shewn that John could not legally administer christian ordinances. He came to close up the Jewish dispensation with all its ceremonies, and thus to prepare the way for the Messiah's reign on earth. Hence his popular and extensive baptism, not only referred to Jewish ceremonies, but pointed to the christian ordinance of baptism, that the minds of the prejudiced Jews might be the better prepared to receive it.

It was no doubt the design of Jesus Christ, in his wisdom and mercy, that the Jewish dispensation, consisting of types and shadows, should pass away as the shades of night before the rising sun, without noise or disorder. Although he perfectly fulfilled all the requisitions of the law, so that the most fastidious Jew could "find in him no fault at all," yet it was done so as to conciliate and harmonize their passions and prejudices, while he paved the way for gospel ordinances, more plain and simple in their nature, and more expressive in their import. Jew and gentile may now meet on honourable terms, and bury forever their prejudices and contentions, with their common Saviour, in the grave of simplicity and self-denial. "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

By those who believe that immersion is the only correct mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, the case of the eunuch, related Acts viii. 38, 39, is considered as conclusive.

There is, however, no evidence to prove that the eunuch was immersed, stronger than there exists to prove the immersion of our Saviour; it has been already satisfactorily proven that he could not have been legally immersed. The eunuch was travelling in his chariot, which forbids the idea that he had any vessel with him to contain water; that Philip had, is still more improbable; it is therefore reasonable to suppose that they were compelled to go down to the water. For the strength of the phrascology of the sentence, which relates the fact, see page 17.

That there was a convenient place at hand to immerse the eunuch; or that each of them had a change of apparel with them; that they changed their apparel on the high way; or that they continued to wear their wet clothes, is, to say the least, extremely improbable. Certain we are, that it would not happen once in one hundred instances in this country, which is much better watered than Judea, that after meeting and conversing with a traveller for a few minutes, there would be found at hand a convenient place to be immersed in water.

And must we take all those improbabilities and inconsistencies, for infallible proof that the eunuch was *immersed*, because it is said they went down into, and came up out of the water; when even our learn-

ed friends are daily in the practice of pressing their neighbours to *come into the fire*, whilst they only mean that they shall come *to it*?

Another argument to prove that immersion is the only legal mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, is founded on what is said Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 11, 12, where we are represented as being *buried* with Christ in baptism. Hence it is supposed that baptism is an emblem or representation of the Saviour's burial and resurrection.

All will readily admit, that when gospel ordinances are figurative, they represent God's love and mercy, and not his angry judgments. Now, we think that immersion in water, more strikingly represents the fate of the wicked ante-deluvians, and Pharaoh's host, than the burial and resurrection of one who was buried in a sepulchre hewn out of a solid rock, and raised by the power of God in great glory. Is not sprinkling a more beautiful and striking emblem of God's love and mercy to fallen man than immersion? See him sprinkle the earth to refresh and render it fruitful, that the sons of men may be saved from death, and refreshed and comforted while passing through this evil world. See him immerse the antideluvians and proud Egyptians, in his great displeasure for their iniquity; and then say, is the emblem or representation an appropriate one—one that becomes the wisdom and perfection of Almighty God? A moment's reflection must convince every impartial person, that Christ's burial and resurrection, was never intended to be represented by immersion.

There is very little resemblance between burying a man, and plunging one under the water, and raising him up again hastily. Burying means to conceal. Christ was in this respect buried; he was the King of Heaven, the Lord of life and glory; and yet he appeared on earth as man—as a servant. Thus it may be correctly said that he was buried or concealed from the sight of mortals, even while he walked before their eyes. He was buried in the deep valley of poverty and self-denial; and we who profess to be his followers, must be buried with him in that cold, unfrequented and unfashionable valley of self-denial and humility, or we shall never reign with him in heaven. Baptism introduces us into Christ's kingdom on earth, and by an unassuming, humble, holy, deeply mortified life, we are hid, or concealed, or buried with our Divine Master. St. Paul says, "Knowing that this our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. vi. 6, 7. Again, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3. The amount is, we are dead to sin, and buried, or "hid" or concealed from the eyes of ignorant man. Christ was buried, hid, concealed in his character from the observation of mortals—"As he is in this world so are we." But we are risen with our Saviour in the sight of God, from our heathen degradation (by baptism) and from our sinful pollutions, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, and should therefore walk in newness of life.

Thus spiritual christians are not only buried with Christ, but with

him they are also dead; dead to sin—to the opinions—the frowns or smiles of dying mortals on earth—dead to this delusive world, with all its pleasing and alluring charms. Yes, we are, or should be, “crucified with Christ.” It is, however, much more pleasing to our fallen nature, to be buried under the water for a moment, than to be dead and buried with Christ through life; which it is clearly intimated in the above passages we must be. Of those who are thus spiritually and really buried with Christ, it is said, “when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Col. iii. 4. Happy for those who are willing to be buried from the eye of mortals—to be little and unknown among men, until Jesus shall appear in the clouds with power and great glory.

The above view of this subject is consistent with the whole tenor of the gospel, (self-denial,) and beautifully illustrates the Christian’s character and condition in this life. But water burial with Christ, is an idea which explains no principle or precept of the gospel, and one which (as far as we can judge) has nothing wise or beneficial connected with it; therefore, it cannot be from God.

On examination of all the passages in the new testament, where it is believed by many, that immersion is clearly and incontestibly proven, we find that there is no conclusive evidence to prove that one individual was ever immersed by John, or the apostles; but on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that immersion never was practised by them in one instance.

We come now to notice some cases of baptism recorded in the new testament, where rationally speaking it could not have been administered by immersion.

On the day of pentecost, the multitude assembled promiscuously; they heard the word preached—were converted to God; and the same day there were three thousand added to the church, and baptized. The only water course contiguous to Jerusalem, where this memorable event transpired, is the brook Cedron. Historians inform us that it is a small rivulet, generally dry except in winter. Harmer observes—“It may have frequently appeared strange to many readers, that all the travellers they have consulted, have found the Kidron dry; but it is to be remembered that those who have published such journals, were not in the Holy Land in winter.”

The Cedron is represented by Calmet and others, as a stream which rises near Jerusalem and falls into the Dead Sea; being entirely dry, except during the rainy seasons; and then its waters are dark and turbid, as it collects all the wash from the neighboring hills—that when it is swelled by rains, it flows with great rapidity. It is rationally impossible that a little brook generally dry except in the rainy seasons, and when raised by the fall of rains, flows with great velocity, could have afforded facilities for immersing three thousand persons in part of a day. And if there were any reservoirs of water in the city, they were all under the immediate controul of those men who had condemned and crucified Christ, and despised his followers.

The company came together composed of strangers and foreigners

as well as citizens of Jerusalem and its vicinity; they could have had no idea of what would occur; under such circumstances it is not reasonable to suppose that they were provided with a change of wearing apparel; and to have immersed three thousand persons—men and women, indiscriminately, without a change of clothes, would have been a very indelicate spectacle for their enemies, or even their friends to behold. My faith is not strong enough to believe they were immersed, neither is my reasoning powers sufficiently acute to devise any plan by which they could have been, according to the circumstances, so far as they have been disclosed to us, under which the administrators and subjects were placed.

It is extremely improbable, and to say the least of it, altogether unreasonable to suppose, that the Philippian jailor and all his household were baptized by immersion. Considering all the circumstances, it is not reasonable to suppose that St. Paul left the jail from the time he was placed there until he was honorably acquitted and discharged. He was thrust into the inner prison, and his feet made fast in the stocks. When the jailor saw the power of God displayed at the midnight hour, he sprang in trembling, and brought Paul out—it is fairly presumed into the outer apartment, or the debtor's room. But to suppose that he was taken out of the prison, or went out in search of a convenient place to immerse the jailor and his family, and then ran back again, is at least unreasonable and improbable.

Were we, however, for argument's sake, to admit the fact, it would indubitably prove that an immediate attendance to the ordinance was more necessary then, than it is now considered by its most zealous advocates. In this country, which is much better supplied with streams of water than the land of Judea, it frequently happens, necessarily, that days and weeks, and even months, intervene between the time of conversation and immersion. In the new testament, there is not one instance recorded where the ordinance was delayed for one day after conversion. Reader, do you really believe that the apostles always preached convenient to some river, or lake, or pond of water, where their converts could be immediately immersed? In Damascus Paul immediately arose and was baptized; not one word about going out of the town to a river or lake to be immersed.

When Cornelius and his friends were converted to God, and had received the Holy Ghost, Peter said, "can any man forbid water." He does not say can any man prevent us from going to the water to be immersed.

These circumstances alone are strong and conclusive evidence that the apostles did not baptize by immersion.

It is not possible that the Israelites in passing over the Red sea could have been immersed. Respecting this circumstance, Paul says—"Moreover brethren I would not have you ignorant, how that our Fathers were under the cloud, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. St. Paul unequivocally declares that they were baptized, and Moses positively

says that they all passed over on dry ground. *Exod. xiv. 16, 22, 29.* Some learned men of the present day have endeavored to prove that the Israelites were immersed! What will not sectarian prejudice do, or rather attempt to do? Surely no man in existence, under the influence of reason and common sense, can believe that an individual, or company of men, ever were, or ever can be immersed on dry ground.

There is an expressive prophecy relative to the Israelites, which has not yet been fulfilled. It points directly to the gospel dispensation; and when that peculiar people shall receive Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and King, they will fully comprehend its import.

“For I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” *Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25.*

God will elevate them out of their Jewish kingdom, which only consisted of types and shadows, and has been long since broken to pieces; and he will introduce them into the light and glory of Christ’s gospel kingdom on earth. He will deliver them from their sectarian prejudices, and their moral pollutions; and as an evidence of their separation from their idols and prejudices, and as an emblem of the white robe of righteousness with which they shall be clothed—their purity of heart—He will baptize, or sprinkle clean water upon them.

Isaiah, taking a more enlarged view of the gospel dispensation, and the Redeemer’s reign on earth, says, “So shall he sprinkle many nations.” *Is. lii. 15.*

The Lord in mercy sprinkles the earth to make it fruitful, and to revive and comfort all who dwell therein. Why should he not sprinkle the church, and pour his spirit upon her that she may be rendered fruitful; and also revived and comforted?

There is a beautiful and intimate connection between the volume of nature and the book of revelation; between the work of creation and the work of redemption. It must necessarily be so—they are both the production of the same hand.

The writings of any celebrated author can generally be recognized by the language and style of the composition. A man’s hand-writing can be identified with almost as much certainty as the features of his face. Almighty God, who is immutable in his character, and glorious in all his perfections, with whom there is no variableness—neither shadow of turning—immersed the world in water in his great displeasure, and for the wickedness of the people. He immersed Pharaoh and his host, and they were all destroyed. The same God sprinkles the earth in infinite mercy and love to the human family.

He sprinkles the flowers, and they bloom in incomparable beauty. He sprinkles the grass and it springs up luxuriantly for the benefit of the beasts of the field, and the herds of the stall. He sprinkles the cultivated fields, and they produce a bountiful supply for the wants and comforts of the dependant children of men.

There is a beauty, consistency, uniformity and harmony in all

the works of the divine hand, which delight and charm the enlightened; purified and contemplative mind; and constrain dying mortals to love and adore their Great Creator, and merciful Redeemer. But where there is discord and incongruity in the practice or theory of any system, natural, moral, or spiritual, it must be imputed to the erring mind, and bungling hand of fallen man.

The gospel is wisely and mercifully adapted to the circumstances and condition of the whole human family; and as God is its author, none of its requisitions are oppressive or unreasonable; which cannot be said; if immersion is the only correct mode of administering the ordinance of baptism.

Would it be reasonable or merciful to compel the natives of Iceland, and the high northern latitudes, where their water is locked up in ice one half the year, to be immersed?

Suppose another case, which frequently occurs under our own observation; a man on a sick and dying bed repents and is happily converted to God; but he cannot comply with a positive injunction or ordinance of that Merciful Being who has pardoned his sins at such an unseasonable period. The supposition is neither reasonable nor consistent with the character of Him who has proclaimed his name to be—"The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

Gospel blessings are designed to flow as well in winter as in summer. Would it be merciful and lenient in our Divine Master to force his ministering servants down into the water every day, (for they should have daily seals to their ministry) through the cold icy season of winter, even in our own temperate climate? It may safely be said, no; he would not impose such a severe task upon his servants without assigning some highly important reason for doing so; this he has not done; nor has it been pointed out by any of the advocates for exclusive immersion.

His first ministers were itinerant men, travelling generally on foot, and were commanded not to take two coats: that they should have been compelled to wear wet clothes constantly, or be dependant on others for a change, and then wait until they were dried and change back again, is altogether unreasonable, and a circumstance we hear nothing of in the new testament.

The necessary conclusion therefore is, that exclusive immersion, is neither reasonable, nor merciful, nor scriptural.

In conclusion, we will remark, that our children are entitled to a place in their Redeemer's kingdom on earth, from the highest authority; that baptism alone can give them a legal title to that privilege and blessing—That to sprinkle or pour the water on the subject, is a rational and scriptural mode of administering that ordinance; but immersion is no where forbidden in God's word; consequently we believe it to be innocent and correct for those who prefer it, as the mode cannot change the character of the ordinance; and God's word expressly says, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." And without charity we are nothing.

CONCLUSION.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SUPPOSED CONVERSATION.

B. Why do you sprinkle, or as you term it, baptize little children?

P. Because we are commanded to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Children compose a large and interesting part of all nations; it would therefore be inconsistent and partial to place the seal of God's people on the parents, and suffer their children to run like the wild animals of the forest.

B. That authority is not sufficient. I must have "a thus saith the Lord," for all I do. Where are you commanded to baptize children?

P. Where do you find "a thus saith the Lord" for administering the sacrament to females? Where is polygamy forbidden?

B. These things may be rationally inferred from God's word.

P. Then you can reason from inference when it answers your purpose! This is quite convenient. Christ says, that children are to be included among the subjects of his kingdom on earth; but in consequence of their fallen state, they are naturally aliens and foreigners, and cannot be legally introduced into his kingdom on earth, but by baptism; therefore, they must be baptized.

B. This is wide of the mark. You must refer me to a plain command for baptizing infants, or I must still believe it to be man's invention.

P. The King's authority is sufficient—He says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

B. There is not a word about baptizing them. What kind of authority is that?

P. You admit that children are all born aliens and foreigners; consequently, far from God; nor is there any ceremony by which they can be legally brought to Christ, i. e. into his kingdom on earth, but baptism. Then his permission to bring them, and his command to baptize all nations, is sufficient authority.

B. We have no evidence to prove that Christ spoke of "unconscious babes;" we presume he did not. Believers are called children.

P. St. Luke says, they were infants. St. Mark says, "he took them up in his arms." Nor do we believe that his disciples would have forbidden believers to come unto him. This is better evidence than you can adduce to prove that polygamy is wrong, and yet you would expel a member from your church for marrying two wives.—Why are you more opposed to children than adults?

B. Your practice of introducing children into the church, is inconsistent, unauthorized, and ruinous to the best interest of the church.

P. We do not introduce them into the church, but into Christ's kingdom on earth, where he himself has placed them.

B. What is the difference between Christ's kingdom on earth, and his church? Are they not different names to express the same thing?

P. Certainly not. Every person or child in the United States,

legally introduced, or born therein, is a citizen of our favoured country, and must be protected by the laws of the land. But every citizen does not hold an office of profit or honour, or compose part of those bodies, who make and administer our laws; yet those distinguished characters are always taken from among our legal citizens. Foreigners, or aliens, or heathens, have no claim to those privileges. Thus our children are legally introduced into Christ's kingdom on earth; their alienated, degraded character is washed away by baptism, and being taught, or instructed in all the customs and laws of his kingdom, they are prepared to make more useful and honorable members of his church.

B. Your theory is imposing; but it is flimsy. Baptism can do your children no good. Suppose you baptize one of your children and leave another unbaptized; would there be any difference between them? They look, and fare alike, and are both equally dear to you.

P. You have a brother who does not profess religion; he is therefore, a child of the devil; you are a Christian—a child of God; now there must be a greater difference between you and your brother in the sight of God, than there is between two persons, one white and the other black; yet there is no difference in your appearance; you fare alike, and are alike honoured by men. God seeth not as man seeth. There is also a difference in the eye of heaven between the baptized and the unbaptized child; though the offence will not lie against the child; but the negligent parent.

B. Your head is full of strange notions.

P. Every judicious farmer places his mark on all his flock; the little ones especially. The old or grown animals are never marked, except when he purchases from some other fold. Does not our great Shepherd regard his flock with as much solicitude as the farmer regards his cattle or sheep? When any part of the rich man's flock, bearing his mark, strays away, and can find nothing to eat, they may return to their master's crib, and find an abundant supply of food, while the sheep bearing no mark, or some neighbour's crop, can have no claim to this good man's bounty. Although it is a privilege to bear a wealthy and good man's mark, yet it does not prevent the flock, old or young, from straying away from his fold, and perishing by famine; neither does it always secure them from the pillaging hand of the robber.

Whose, or what mark do your unbaptized children bear? To what kingdom do they belong? Are they Jews, or Mahomedans, or Christians? or have they no name or identity of character among men? Are they suspended between heaven and earth, as if they were unworthy of either?

B. You are too visionary altogether. I have no idea of your circuitous queries. I will lay these aside, and come boldly to the point, and prove from new testament authority, that nothing is baptism but immersion, and that believers are the only proper subjects to receive that ordinance. This is a scriptural and orthodox view of the subject. This doctrine is gaining ground daily. Some are rising up from other churches, and claiming immersion at our hands. Great

is truth, and it must prevail—may you and I be governed by its dictates. Seeing that there is no probability that either of us will be convinced by the other, or change our sentiments, I must bid you adieu.

P. I would have been much gratified, if our conversation could have turned for a few moments on the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism; but as you have laid your foundation on the corner stone of prejudice, by affirming that your opinion is orthodox, and cannot be changed, and have concluded that my foundation is too firm to be moved; or you may judge that my prejudices are as strong as your own, I must respond, adieu.

B. If you will reason logically and candidly, and not ask so many curious questions, I will see you again to-morrow, by divine permission, and convince you in a few moments that you are wrong.

P. I will be glad to see you. Rest assured, that I shall endeavor to be governed by reason and revelation.

B. Good morning, friend P. I hope your mind is more rational to-day than it was yesterday.

P. I am glad to see you. As you have unequivocally asserted, that nothing is baptism but immersion, where do you think the 3,000 were immersed on the day of pentecost? The only water course near to Jerusalem, is the brook Cedron, which we are informed is generally dry, except in the rainy seasons. It then flows with great velocity, receiving and carrying off all the filth about the city.

B. There were in Jerusalem the pools Siloam and Bethesda, and no doubt many other public baths also.

P. Although you demand ‘a thus saith the Lord’ for baptizing infants, I will not be so uncharitable with you—I will be satisfied with rational inference. You do not pretend to say that they could have been immersed in the Cedron; nor could the apostles have access to the public pools, baths, &c.—they were all under the control of their enemies.

B. It is presumable that the excitement and power displayed on that occasion were so great, that all opposition was forgotten, and even the rulers of the Jews were awed into silence, and cheerfully submitted to the requisitions of the apostles.

P. Would not such a circumstance have been mentioned; particularly as the disciples were a few days afterwards publicly beaten by the command of the Jewish authorities?

B. We are called on to believe facts, without inquiring into the whys and wherefores.

P. I admit the importance of faith; but God himself has not called on us to believe without evidence. Do you believe that the 3,000 changed their dress after they were baptized? or did they remain in their wet clothes? Do you think they all came prepared for the occasion with a change of raiment?

B. The scripture gives us no information on the subject; therefore, we have no right to inquire into such little matters.

P. In every instance recorded in the new testament, baptism is administered immediately after conversion—as soon as the individuals’

hearts are changed by the power of God, their condition is changed by baptism. Do you believe that the apostles always preached near to some river or lake, where their converts could be immersed? In Damascus—in the Phillipian jail—at Cornelius's house, &c. Do you really believe that those and the like places were always furnished with conveniences for immersing people in water?

B. I am surprised at your wild notions: they have nothing to do with the subject. We can know nothing about those unimportant things. The early converts to christianity were all immersed: this is enough for us to know.

P. Do you not think that there would have been something said about special baptizings, suitable places, change of apparel, &c., if nothing but immersion was practised by the apostles?

B. I suppose not. They have said nothing respecting those particulars; neither should we disturb our minds about them. John baptized in Jordan, and at Enon, because there was much water there. Does not this prove incontrovertibly, that he immersed those whom he baptized?

P. Certainly not. John baptized immense multitudes of people in the wilderness. In such places there are no houses. Do you believe that those crowds, composed of men and women, changed their clothes in presence of each other? or did they wear their wet apparel until they returned from the wilderness? or were they immersed, as some were in the following centuries, i. e. naked?

B. Your unconquerable prejudice against exclusive immersion, and your predilection for 'baby sprinkling' leads you into wild and absurd notions respecting the 'imposing ordinance of immersion.'

P. Did not John say that he baptized with water, but that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost?

B. He does make such a declaration.

P. Which of those two do you suppose is the most important?

B. The baptism of the Holy Ghost no doubt.

P. Must not the greater uniformly govern the lesser? Is it not necessary that the shadow and the substance should perfectly correspond?

B. It is reasonable; and generally it is the case.

P. Did not Christ baptize the 3,000 on the day of pentecost, by pouring his spirit on them?

B. True, he did so; but have not several learned and wise men proven that the Holy Ghost was poured out so copiously on that occasion, that they were all immersed in its overwhelming influence?

P. Then is the dispute settled. There is no difference between us, except that you require more water for the purpose than we generally use. However great the effusion, and overwhelming the influence of the Holy Ghost may have been on the day of pentecost, yet was it *poured* on the people. Why should we contend any longer about shadows, and fall out by the way about nothing? We admit immersion to be a valid mode of baptism, and you say that immersion may be performed by pouring. Were we to use more water, and

pour it more profusely on those whom we baptize, would you then suffer us to approach our Father's table with you?

B. I would be glad to see the different branches of the church united, and live together in love and harmony; but a positive rule in our church debars all who have not been regularly immersed, from communing with us. We must submit to the powers that be.

P. Please to shew me the particular rules, doctrine and discipline of your church.

B. Here they are. The bible is our discipline: you can examine it at your leisure.

P. So say the Antinomians, and moderate Calvinists, as well as the Armenians, Unitarians and Universalists, and every other denomination, say that the bible is the rule of their faith—it is their standard. I suppose, however, you only mean to say, that your opinion of the doctrine of the bible, forms the discipline of your church.

B. Yes. Without charity we are nothing; therefore we suffer all our members to be fully persuaded in their own mind. We have no Popes or Bishops in our church.

P. And do you regard the opinion of every individual in your church as orthodox and infallible, and condemn all others by excluding them from their Father's table? Is this your charity?

B. I would rather see that rule changed; but that which cannot be healed must be endured. We are digressing.

P. I thank you for the rebuke. We will return to the subject.

B. What have you to say of Christ's baptism? You do not think, or pretend to say that he was not immersed?

P. I have recently seen a pamphlet published by ———, on the rights and privileges of children; the author clearly proves that Christ was not immersed, pp. 21, 22, 23. I consider his argument conclusive.

B. I have seen and examined the pamphlet myself; but my opinion is very different from your's.

P. Can you by fair reasoning refute his arguments?

B. I consider them visionary and heterodox. He asserts that Christ was legally constituted a priest when he was baptized, which every one knows to be absurd and unfounded.

P. He has given evidence to prove that fact which would be received in any court of justice in the christian world. His argument, in my opinion, is unanswerable.

B. He blends the law and the gospel—the old and the new testament together. The gospel does not require the law of Moses to prop it up. What do you think of the eunuch's baptism? He went down into, and came up out of the water. Surely you will not say that he was not immersed.

P. Nothing definite can be proven from the phraseology of a sentence. The inscription placed over our Lord's head when he was crucified, is differently related by each of the Evangelists.

B. That was written in Latin, and Greek, and Hebrew.

P. The gospels were originally written in Greek; we should not, therefore, place an undue stress upon the phraseology of our trans-

lation. The substance is what we should desire. It is said that Christ went up into the mountain. Do you believe he was immersed in the ground?

B. Certainly not; such an idea would be unreasonable and absurd.

P. And is it reasonable to suppose, that a rich man riding in a chariot, would, without enquiry or objection, allow himself to be immersed in water on the high-way, when he must continue to wear his wet clothes, or change them by the way-side?

B. Such unnatural suppositions is descending from the dignity of the gospel. The eunuck was immersed—no rational man can doubt of the fact.

P. Within eight or ten verses of the passage which the eunuch was reading, the following sentence is written—"So shall he sprinkle many nations." Is it not reasonable to suppose that he would have enquired what that declaration meant, before he was immersed?

B. He was not so inquisitive as you are I expect.

P. I will thank you to inform me what that declaration means?

B. I do not know; neither is it important that I should. The old testament is done away.

P. Why then do you read and preach from passages contained in it?

B. Because it is God's word, and contains predictions which have not yet all been fulfilled.

P. The text under consideration points to the gospel dispensation. Is there one passage in the old or new testament which says—I will dip, or plunge, or immerse all nations, or even one individual?

B. I am suprised at the force of prejudice! Please to inform me how we can be buried with Christ in baptism, if we are not to be immersed in water.

P. Allow me to refer you to the pamphlet adverted to pp. 24, 25, where this point is satisfactorily illustrated. Have you read it?

B. I have; but I do not believe the author's visionary ideas.

P. Can you refute, and disprove his arguments?

B. The word of God affords a complete refutation of his notions. God's word is plam on the subject, and requires no comment.

P. How unfortunate that every one cannot see with your eyes; if they could, it would at once harmonize the whole christian world. St. Paul says, that the Israelites were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, &c., and Moses expressly declares that they all passed over on dry ground. Do you believe that they were immersed?

B. Certainly they were. Several learned men, whose opinions we cannot doubt, have proven that they were immersed on that occasion.

P. Learning is an invaluable blessing; but I have never before known its illimitable power. A man by the charm of his eloquence and learning can prove that an individual or company of men may be immersed in water on dry ground!! I fear that such learning will never be a very great blessing to the human family.

B. The learned and wise divines of high standing in the church, almost unanimously believe that the Greek word baptizo means im-

mersion and nothing else. You will not I hope resist such conclusive evidence in favour of orthodox principles.

P. Pardon me—I cannot receive your declaration; the contrary is the fact. A large majority, nay, nearly all the divines of extensive learning, for many centuries past, have, believed just the contrary.

B. Please to mention their names.

P. I include every pedo-baptist divine now living, and all who have lived since the introduction of the gospel on earth, which will embrace at least nine-tenths of the whole number of those who have been men of extensive learning. If they believe one thing and practice another, then are they down-right hypocrites and wilful deceivers. You cannot yourself think this of them.

B. I believe they have not given their conscience fair play.

P. Your sentiments are at least uncharitable. Under your view of the subject, suppose a minister of a delicate constitution was compelled to go into the water and baptize forty or fifty persons every day during the cold freezing weather which we have experienced for the two past winters; would it be an easy yoke and light burden?

B. So then, that is the ground of your objection to immersion; you are afraid of the cross. You have forgotten that the cross is the way to the crown.

P. If we deny ourselves any excess in food or raiment, and give it to the poor, Christ has promised to reward us in heaven for such privations. But what can we gain for the cause of God, or for others, or for ourselves, by standing in the freezing water for hours together? Poor fallen man does not impose penance on his children, or order them to act without motive or benefit.

B. You are too curious and inquisitive. It is no doubt offensive to God.

P. If immersion is the only mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, it would not only be a heavy yoke during the winter season in our own climate, but in the high northern latitudes it would be oppressive. In many cases which may occur in all countries, it would not only be burdensome, but it would be impracticable. Many repent and are pardoned on a dying bed; but they cannot be immersed. This alone is strong presumptive evidence that it is not the mandate of heaven.

B. I see there is no hope of reclaiming you from your delusions. I am sorry for you. I esteem you as a neighbour and a friend; but as a christian, your mind is unfortunately and desperately distempered.

P. I really expected that you had better arguments to support your cause. If you will pray more, and read more, and reflect more, I have no doubt but in future, you will be enabled to exercise more charity for those who differ with you in sentiment, even on the subject of baptism.